

Positive impact expected from training changes

The Electric Power Training Center, while currently a usable, viable entity, will be renovated and upgraded to become a state-of-the-art power operations training facility.

Training will remain a top priority at Western, but with significant changes that management and training personnel believe are in the best interests of the agency, its customers and its employees.

These changes—primarily requiring the regions to handle their own administrative and craft training needs—are expected to hold positive economic benefits as well as better meeting the training needs of all concerned.

Of the three training programs residing at the CSO—Electric Power Training Center, Video Studio, and Corporate Learning Center (for administrative training)—only the EPTC and the Video Studio will be in existence by the end of July. By the end of the year the Craft Training Center in Montrose will also be closed.

Instead, the regions will handle their own administrative and craft training, with the administrative transition taking place by the end of July and the craft training transition by the end of the year. At CSO,

administrative training will be handled by HR. Both the EPTC and the Video Studio will remain where they are—even after CSO's move next year.

Corporate Training Manager **Leo Roux** said the main reason for the decentralization of administrative training is that regional needs and those of the CSO are too varied to warrant a centralized program.

"It was concluded that it made no sense

to centralize all programs when needs among Western employees are so dissimilar," Roux said, noting that until Transformation three years ago, administrative training was handled by the regions and CSO's HR and that it generally worked well then.

The Craft Training Center, which primarily trains apprentices in line, electrical, communication and metering/relay operations, is no longer as necessary as it once was to Western, Roux added. Now, the agency is easily able to hire skilled journeymen for many vacancies from other utilities, drastically reducing training time and costs.

"Those offices which need apprentices will be able to train their own," Roux said, noting that currently the Montrose center is training just 14 apprentices. "It doesn't make good business sense to maintain a training center that supports the few apprentices who will be hired in the future."

Roux is more than a little pleased, however, that the EPTC will not only remain at CSO, but it will be upgraded as well.

"I'm ecstatic about management's decision," Roux said. "The EPTC is a unique, one-of-a-kind facility that draws people from New York, Alabama and other states—people from all over North America, including employees from the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and others in the utility industry."

Roux said the EPTC, while currently a usable, viable entity, will be renovated and upgraded to become a state-of-the-art power operations training facility.

Regarding administrative training, Roux said regional administrative officers will meet annually with CSO's HR manager to identify common training needs and create special projects teams to coordinate, schedule and support Westernwide training initiatives.

The elimination of the Corporate Learning Center is expected to save Western \$686,000 annually, while the closing of the Craft Training Center is expected to save \$292,000.

